

THE REFORMER.

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth.—*Jeremiah*, v. 1.

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LETTER FROM NORTH CAROLINA.

Such candour and sincerity are evinced in the following letter, and there are such genuine marks of integrity and uprightness discoverable in the writer, that we cannot withhold its publication although its insertion may awaken the prejudices of some from whom better things might be expected. We should all be willing to hear the truth without disguise; for something more than can now be found in any denomination of people, is wanting to make the world better, and individuals what they ought to be. Neither sectarism, deism, fanaticism, or ranterism, will accomplish this. Not a single sect now in existence, nor any body of people that shall hereafter rise up, as a sect, will ever improve the present condition of mankind or bring people to be truly right. Sectarism has nearly run itself out—it has effected all that it ever will be able to effect in the reformation of mankind. It has proved itself insufficient to produce a right state of things, and is now waxing old like a garment that will shortly be laid aside. And though thousands who have been spoiled by sectarians, on becoming unloosed from them may run wild and get bewildered in their own imaginations, it can produce no argument in favour of sects, but only against them; for persons completely spoiled by sectarism can never be made any thing of should they come out from sects—being much the same as a rotten piece of timber taken from an old decayed building, which could only have a tendency to injure a better and more substantial edifice if used in its construction. It is only those who have acted in a great measure sincere, and preserved a principle of integrity, that any thing can be hoped from, if they withdraw from the ranks of sectarism, and it is a pity that any others should come out from sects, for they cannot endure the trials that they must encounter, nor govern themselves to their own advantage or the advantage of others, much less to the advantage of a cause the basis of which consists in purity of intention and of uprightness and integrity of conduct.

Pasquotank Co. N. C. 3mo. 20, 1828.

Respected friend,—I have long desired the opportunity of conversation with thee, though in all probability I shall never be so favored, but I trust thou wilt never be discouraged, while thy life is spared, from maintaining the firm and decided stand which thou hast taken against the unscriptural and antichristian proceedings and practices which have been got up among the different associations of professors in these modern days. There needs no greater proof of the fallen, degenerate, and corrupt state of the Christian Church, than to look at the astonishing increase of her wealth, pomp, and grandeur, and the base conformity to the fashions and maxims of the world, manifested in a large majority of the most zealous professors of religion. Chiefly what I design in this communication is, to inform thee that I have at last, after many years of halting and tossing between the winds and fires of contending and opposing parties and sentiments, come to the conclusion to forsake and come out from all connection with any of the organized bodies of the present day; believing it to be my duty so to do, in order that I may be free and disentangled from all sectarian laws and prejudices, preferring to belong to the church in the wilderness, and be a non-conformist. I have worshipped the beast long enough. I was about fourteen years a regular and zealous Methodist, and about 1822–23 I left the Methodists and joined the Friends, and I can truly say that I have been surprised and astonished in my own experience, to see and feel what a powerful influence sectarism and party zeal have on those who are attached to a particular way or form of

religious profession. I left the Methodists on the grounds, 1st. Of their holding and dealing in slaves—2nd. Their joining in the wars of the nations to fight and kill their fellow men—3d. They have a hireling ministry—4th. The despotic nature of their government; and 5th. The many tedious and useless forms and ceremonies of that society.

The same objections and arguments, it is true, cannot be used against the Friends, nevertheless it must be allowed, that they are bigoted and superstitious in their attachments to their own particular way,—rigidly oppose their members attending the meetings of others, and are not easily persuaded to believe it probable that one may follow the true guide and right direction in any other way.

I have signified, in a written apology to the society, my intention to withdraw from the connexion, in which I endeavoured to state all my reasons in as friendly and loving a manner as I possibly could; but I have been informed by a minister of the society, that no notice is to be taken of my apology; that they have one uniform rule by which they deal with all delinquents; and that if I persisted in the neglect of the attendance of meetings, they should proceed to disown me on that ground.

Like all other Protestant Reformers, they have brought a little of Papacy along with them, so much as will not allow a man the liberty of withdrawing when he thinks proper, but they must proceed to expel him according to their rules, pretending the right to hold the keys of the kingdom, that whatsoever is bound or loosed by them on earth is ratified in heaven.

At the time I left the Methodists, I believed it was required of me to forsake all parties in religion, and endeavour to follow the dictates of divine revelation, and have none to rule over me but Christ alone; but dreading the storm of reproach and persecution which such a course would have brought upon me; and finding that

those things for which I had suffered in the Methodist society, did not exist among the Friends, I joined them, hoping to find deliverance from my distress, and for a time enjoyed a good degree of peace, and soon drank largely of that spirit of bigotry and selfishness, which more or less exists in all sectarian associations; for I became lavish in praises of that way; thought I had found the best society in the world, and frequently spoke things to the prejudice and discredit of others.

But my state here was not to be of long duration, my former convictions of the impropriety, yea disadvantages, of sects and parties in the one religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, returned upon me, and I was brought to see myself, to all intents and purposes, a worshipper of the beast. But I can truly say, the leaving the societies which I have been connected with, has been and still is afflicting indeed to me; to forsake the fellowship and communion of many friends and brethren who smiled on me, gave me the right hand of fellowship, and bade me God speed, especially the Methodist, among whom I believed, and still believe, I was useful as a preacher, in which society I once thought to live and die. Numbers in both societies I feel that I dearly love, and they are no less warm and unreserved in their expressions of kindness and good will towards me, not the smallest difference between myself and a solitary member ever took place. Now under all these circumstances, with the certain expectations of reproach, slander, and a flood of opposition all in full view, I venture to take up a testimony against all sects and parties. My wife also, who has been in both the above mentioned societies, has left them on the same principles.

WM. BEDGOOD.

[From the *Christian Baptist*.]

SPIRITUAL WAR.

This is a time of great religious excitement: and with it rages the spirit of partyism, to an alarming extent.

Never probably, have we seen, in our country, such vigorous efforts made and making, as at present, to support clerical domination; and to put down all persons and things that stand opposed to its reign.

The most of the various sects seem willing, for the time being, to make friends, and unite their *mighty forces* and *mighty energies* against the sons of *religious liberty*, and the cause of *religious freedom*. The odds indeed is fearful, in favor of ecclesiastical tyranny. But the war between the parties is declared, and the battle has begun. Behold the armies in the field!

On the one hand you see an almost innumerable host of veterans, and new recruits, who have been trained in the schools of sectarianism; and are panoplied with learning; with eloquence; with great moral influence; with creeds and confessions of faith; with the authority of great names; of councils and of the Church; and are spurred on to mighty exertion by interest and the love of Power. On the other hand you see a mere handful; a stripling band, with comparatively but little of the wisdom of this world; but little eloquence; but little moral influence; with no human Creeds; the authority of no popular Church, and no popular names to plead in behalf of their cause; nor have they any earthly interests to stimulate them to action.

While, therefore, their enemies are triumphing and rejoicing in their anticipations of victory, in consequence of their superior physical, moral and intellectual strength, and are approaching the onset with all the self confidence of Goliath of Gath; the sons of Gospel liberty, with all humility, all the confidence of faith, and all the armour of God, are approaching to meet them no less confident of victory, than was David, when he went forth to meet the uncircumcised Philistine. For greater is he who is for them, than all who can be against them. Though their enemies bring to bear upon them all their artillery, as well as their small arms; yet safe-

ly lodged within the impervious walls of salvation and truth, they remain secure; and see their enemies consuming their strength, and wasting their ammunition to little purpose. For their cause is the Lord's and must prevail.

But it may be asked, in relation to them, 'What evil have they done,' that they should be so opposed? Why this opposition to them, from all the sects? The answer is easy. If *they* and *their principles* prevail, sectarianism must fall, like Dagon before the Ark of God; and those who have made merchandise of the people, and have filled offices, created by themselves for their own aggrandisement, will fall from their mighty eminence, and great will be their fall.

No wonder, therefore, that they exclaim, as the Jews did, in relation to our Saviour—"What do we? if we let this man alone, all the world will go after him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation." O Lord, stand by thy people, plead thine own cause, and let thy righteousness go forth as brightness, and thy salvation as a lamp that burneth!

SINCERITY.

There is no greater virtue beneath the heavens, nor any that is calculated more to exalt the human character, than sincerity. It is indeed the fountain of all other virtues, and where an individual is discovered to be sincere in all his professions, looks and actions, you will find every other good quality associated in some measure with this. A sincere man is never embarrassed in conversation—never finds it necessary to controvert opinions formerly expressed through timidity, and never shrinks from a repetition of that which he has previously uttered. His friendship may be depended upon, his pledge is a sufficient surety in matters of business, and his word is a sufficient reliance in covenants of honour or interest. To such a man dissimulation is considered not only as a vice, but as a quality disgracefully con-

temptible, and one that derogates from honest character and honourable principle. His admonitions are those of kindness, his advice is uninfluenced by any hidden motive, and his smile is the true index of his heart. Such a man's sympathy in sorrow, or counsel in adversity are invaluable treasures. There is a Spanish proverb, saying, "no price is too great for good counsel," and there is not—and the value of advice is doubly enhanced, by a knowledge that it is given from a pure motive, and in sincerity. Yet the sincere are ever the victims to the hypocritical, and the more this virtue is practised, the greater is the liability to reap disadvantageous results. The firmest friends dislike to be told of their errors, and view such counsellors with a suspicious, if not a malicious eye. Enemies will not listen to shadowy portraits of themselves, without treasuring in their bosoms a bitter portion of retribution. Yet the sincere man is alike candid with friend or foe—despises the consequences of sincerity, however weighty; and only marvels that others should conceive turpitude of conduct to exist in the exhibition of truth. But thus it is with the world—not but there are some among mankind who can listen to their own weak qualities and be thankful, but the number is so remarkably circumscribed, that sincerity seldom comes in proper collision with the very few who can be patiently reprehended. [Philadelphia Album.]

[From the N. Y. Telescope.]

MISSIONARIES.

"In the house of Lords on the 13th March, Lord King presented a petition from the Rev. Cornelius Griffin, a clergyman of the Church of England in Nova Scotia, against any further grant of public money to the society for propagating the gospel in foreign parts, on the ground that great abuses had taken place in the distribution of those funds. The petitioner had received an offer of £100 to induce him to keep back the

petition, but he refused it. His Lordship mentioned persons who had from six to eight hundred per ann. of other ecclesiastical income, who took from the society £200 pr. ann. in the character of missionaries. The total annual expenditures of the society was £28,000, of which the extravagant sum of £2900 went to defray the expenses of management. The petitioner also stated that false reports of the state of affairs abroad were constantly sent home to the society—Churches and congregations being represented as existing where there were neither. The petitioner had incurred the displeasure of his superiors *for refusing to assist in carrying on this system.*"

The above is taken from an English paper and goes to give people of this country some idea of the use made of their money, when given for missionary purposes, for notwithstanding the "*many privations, fatigues, labours and hardships*" most of the missionaries suffer, their situations generally are far more comfortable than thousands of those who contribute their money to render them so—witness some of their mission stations; "Mayhew, a station amongst the Choctaws, an earthly paradise, property \$9,035." At Elliot in 1822 the property consisting of 70 acres of *improved land well stocked, and having convenient buildings* \$15,490." Union, "the tract of land ceded by the Indian Chiefs in this mission embraces a Prairie of 4 square miles in extent, suitable buildings and mills have been erected, and the farm is productive in cotton, grain, vegetables, &c. valued in 1822 at \$24,000," &c. &c. And notwithstanding this is the fact, there is scarcely a day but we are called upon to contribute towards the support of their schemes.

[From the Philadelphia Gazette.]

PUBLIC CHARITIES.

Nothing seems so liable to abuse as public charities. Individuals may found and endow Orphan Houses, Alms-houses, Charity Schools, &c. &c. but

it is very difficult to secure a faithful application of the funds.

Within the last few years, a rigid examination has been instituted in England of abuses of trusts of this kind: but the very investigation itself seems to have been but a new abuse: for it was stated recently by a member of Parliament in his place, "that the expense of these investigations was within a few pounds of *one million sterling*, and yet no practical good had resulted from these inquiries. Numberless abuses were described by the Commissioners: but nothing practical to remedy them was attempted. In Brentwood, in Essex, about one hundred years ago, an estate worth £100 a year was left for the education of the children of the town. In process of time the property became worth £2,000 a year, and only *three children* were educated by this fund at present. The greater part of this sum was absorbed by a single individual and his family."

Mr. Harvey, the member who made this statement, concluded by moving for returns of the Chancery proceedings respecting charities which have been ordered by the Commissioners, and some opinion as to the period of time when their inquiries would terminate.

Sir J. Graham suggested that the latter clause of the motion could not by any *possibility* be answered: and he would recommend that it should be expunged.—The suggestion was adopted and the motion agreed to.

Thirty eight reports have been made by Commissioners and Committees,—the mere investigations have cost between four and five million dollars,—and yet it is impossible to say when the inquiries will terminate!

Let us keep a close watch on the charitable institutions in this country. Human nature is the same in all lands. If abuses once creep into the administration of our charities, it may cost us millions merely to investigate them, and then afterwards we shall have to look for means for applying a remedy.

[From a Cry from the Four Winds, printed at Boston.]

Party zeal has arisen to such a height among the orthodox that they can scarcely think, speak or write on any thing but the advancement of *their* cause. In their sermons, addresses, exhortations, &c. their main object is to excite their people to the most vigorous efforts in the extension of their lines. Not a doctrine, nor precept, nor duty is touched upon without an effort to make it in some way subservient to their grand design; and the chief burthen of their prayers is, that God would enable them to carry all their plans into successful operation. In all their private circles, this is their favourite topic; and if but two of them meet by the way, or at the corner of a street, it is impossible for them to separate without a few words on their darling subject. Their women and children are infected with the disease, and nothing is heard through all their ranks but *Desolations*—Moral wastes—Heathen lands—Education societies—Missionary societies—Tract societies—Sabbath school unions—Cent societies—Mite societies—Rag societies—Missionary boxes—Missionary fields, &c. without end.

Such a universal impulse could not have arisen from mere accidental causes. It is nothing less than the development of a system that has been planned and organized in the secret conclaves of their leading men, at the head-quarters of orthodoxy. These men understand each other perfectly, and pass the word of command to the next in power and influence, and from them it is passed to the next, and so on through all their ranks. This impulse is kept alive by an immense host of emissaries, sent out in every direction, to stir up the people and levy contributions. These emissaries have spread themselves over all the land, and like the frogs in Egypt, have come up even into our houses, our bed-chambers, our ovens and our kneading troughs, till they have become a public nuisance

which can no longer be silently endured. Something *must* be done to drive these vermin back to their proper element; and what can be done better than to point out their hopping, their crawling, their croaking, and their varied reptile movements.

We have already given to the public numerous facts bearing on these points. The orthodox have endeavored to evade the force of our statements by privately insinuating that they are untrue, or if true, that they are so distorted and coloured as to make them appear very different from what they are in reality. This answers their purpose very well in their own circle where every thing they say is received as infallible, and every thing they do is judged of by their *motive*, which is no other than to benefit *their* cause. But they know better than to deny these statements in public, or to do or say any thing calculated to lead to any thing like a fair and open investigation of the subject.—“They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” But we shall continue to cry aloud and spare not, till all their abominable deeds are made manifest, and come abroad.

One of the most favorite and difficult parts of their policy is to maintain the *appearance* of friendship with the denomination commonly called Methodist, and yet at the same time trample them under their feet. This requires the utmost stretch of their exalted powers of *double dealing*; and sometimes some of their raw hands, who have not been sufficiently initiated into the mystery of their order, or who suffer the heat of the moment to carry them beyond their accustomed line of *prudence*, overshoot their mark, and undo in a moment what has cost them much time and labour.

[From the same.]

UNION! UNION!!

Mr. Editor: The orthodox seem determined that the Methodists *shall* unite with them. They pursue this ob-

ject as though they thought their all depended upon it; and as it respects their project of making themselves master of the whole country, no doubt this is really so. To think of bringing all men into actual church communion with the orthodox, would be too vain a project for even the most sanguine of that most sanguine sect. Of this they have not the most distant hope. But they have very strong hopes of forming a species of confederacy, of which they shall be the head; and this is the grand object of their national societies. They think if they can persuade all denominations to consent to become members of these societies, that this will bring their denominational movements in a great measure under orthodox influence; and they are perfectly correct in their opinion.

The most influential of these societies are the Sabbath school and tract societies. These societies print tracts and Sabbath school books whose general tendency is to inculcate principles congenial with orthodoxy; and if all other denominations unite with the orthodox in these societies, and take their books from them, they of course consent not merely to have their children initiated into the principles of orthodoxy, but do actually engage to be themselves the instruments of teaching them that which they do not believe themselves; and are thus made the instruments of pulling down their own cause, to the no small satisfaction and diversion of their enemies.

They are aware how fond people are of purchasing books *cheap*, especially for *charitable* purposes, and that this cannot be done but by publishing large editions, which require large capitals and extensive circulation. They have already obtained these capitals, to a considerable extent, and are now endeavoring to persuade every denomination to be their medium of circulation, and insist upon it, on the principles of charity, and that it is high time for all parties to lay aside contention on their distinctive features, and labour

for the advancement of the general cause.

ANOTHER NEW SOCIETY.

It is known perhaps to most of our readers, that a Convention not long since assembled in New York, from various parts of the country, and organized a Society, denominated "THE GENERAL UNION FOR PROMOTING THE OBSERVANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH." This "Convention" moreover drew up a very lengthy Address, and sent it forth in the papers, inscribed "*To the people of the United States.*" A few extracts from this address are here given.

"It is not denied that the Sabbath brings to our aid the only power which can conduct our glorious experiment of self-government to an auspicious result." "The folly of expecting to maintain the religious and moral character of the nation without the Sabbath, would not be surpassed by the attempt to disseminate learning over the nation by empty school-houses and colleges." "It is the object of this Union [for promoting the observance of the Sabbath] to enforce the laws of the several states in favour of the Sabbath. We have not the madness to think of coercion merely. It is by the calling up of a general attention to the subject; by the extension of information; by the power of example; by renovated vigilance in families and among ministers of Christ and professors of his religion; and by withdrawing our capital and patronage, as fast as may be, from all participation in the violation of the Sabbath—that we hope to convince the understandings of our countrymen, and awaken their consciences, and gain their hearts to abstain voluntarily and entirely from the violation of that day which God has given to us as the token of his love, and upon which he has suspended all our hopes for time and eternity." "And now we look for co-operation to the *Government* of this nation, the *representatives* of free-

and powerful example, by their cogent arguments in the cabinet and halls of legislation, and by their manifestation of a sacred regard for the Sabbath in all the arrangements of business at the seat of government, in the army and the navy, and upon the highways of the land. We trust those whom we have clothed with power by our suffrage to see to it that the commonwealth receive no detriment, while they guide the destinies of this great nation, will not stop their ears against the supplication, nor disappoint the hopes of millions."

If the clergy were to assemble together and concert measures for reducing their extravagant salaries, and put a stop to the dishonour brought upon the gospel by making merchandise of it in the manner it is done at present, we might then believe they were actuated by upright intentions and would prove a blessing to the community. Until they do this, all their meeting together to mend the morals of the nation, and save the souls of men, is no better than the assembling of a body of Popish Cardinals, and will be of no more benefit to true piety and the cause of Christ. To suppose they are actuated by any other motives than to promote their own interest and ascendancy, would show a total ignorance of their character, which approaches as near to that of the Scribes and Pharisees in our Saviour's time, as two classes of men can well resemble each other. The Sabbath seems seized upon by the Presbyterian clergy as a rallying point, to draw in most other sects to act in concert with them, in order to employ their influence and numerical strength to promote their own advantage and ascendancy. For, as in all the great societies, the Presbyterians are the managers, and if they can succeed in establishing through the country a more strict observance of the Sabbath, the Presbyterians will have all the credit of it, as done solely by themselves, and their authority and influ-

ence will be placed on a foundation not easily to be shaken or withstood.

We find that there are others who view this subject much in the same light with ourselves. The following is selected from the "CRY FROM THE FOUR WINDS," published at Boston by a preacher in regular standing in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"The formation of this society [General Union Society for Promoting the Observance of the Sabbath] is evidently neither more nor less than a part of the schemes of orthodoxy in its attempts at universal empire. It is designed and calculated to have the same bearing as the American Sabbath School Union—Tract society—Bible society—Temperate society, &c.—The *professed* objects of all these societies are but secondary; something more *elevated* and more *dear* to the hearts of the projectors and movers of these societies lies hid from the view of superficial observers. The Scribes and Pharisees were very pompous in their attention to the mint and the anise and the cummin, though they omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith. And why did they pay such scrupulous attention to these minor points? Because in this way they made a great show of religion, secured the high opinion of a great many people, obtained a place in Moses' seat, and in the uppermost rooms at feasts, and in the chief seats in the synagogues, and were greeted in the markets, and were called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. These were the orthodox of that day. *Their* cause was the cause of God, and those who refused to co-operate with them, were of course fighting against God. It is just so with our modern Orthodox Pharisees.—Their object is the same, viz: *Religious supremacy*. And their plans of operation differ only as the case requires."

"On the principles on which this society is formed, there will be no end to the formation of societies; we shall need a society for the suppression of lying, another for the suppression of

stealing—swearing—cheating—covetousness—gambling—a society for the *proper* attendance at orthodox churches, &c. &c. to infinity. And above all shall we not need a society for the prevention of the publication of improper books, pamphlets, &c. especially that vile publication, THE CRY FROM THE FOUR WINDS.

"But why not lay the axe at the *root* of the tree at once, and form a society to draw up articles of faith and rules of life to be of universal application! And why not raise an immense capital sufficient to *enforce* those articles and rules, not by *coercion* but by *persuasion*, such as having no kind of dealing with men who refuse to be religious. God would no doubt give his *blessing* to such a society just as quick as he would to a half way society. We should then be driving business on a large scale; we should not only have our religious stage coaches and steam boats, but also religious taverns, turn-pikes and rail-ways, religious grist mills, saw mills and cotton factories, religious bakers, butchers and milk-men, barbers, boot blacks and window cleaners, scavengers and sweep O's.

"By such a pious coalition and simultaneous movement, every man would be *persuaded* either to become religious, or seek an asylum in some other community, where *irreligion* was tolerated.

"No man, of course, could be a member of this society, who had a wife or child irreligious, except they were immediately driven from under his roof in true orthodox style. No woman could be a member of this society who persisted in the *wickedness* of living with a man with whom she had been united in the bonds of wedlock if he was not religious and refused to become so, and it is questionable whether she could be allowed to nurse her little one except it had upon it *some appearance* of the mark of election, and gave some evidence of having within it the *genuine seeds* of grace. To use one of Dr. Beecher's favour-

ite phrases, this would be *drawing the line* to perfection,—but it would be nothing more than acting out in full what the Sabbath society is doing by halves.”

It is a delicate point to say it, but it is no less a fact, that every well read and well informed Presbyterian priest very well knows that there is no divine authority under the Gospel for keeping one day more holy than another, or observing any particular day as a Sabbath. It is all hypocrisy in them in pretending to any such thing, and is done from interested motives to secure the attendance of people on their preaching. The great Apostle of Presbyterianism, John Calvin,* Arch Deacon Paley, and others, have expressed themselves fully on this point; and the arguments which they advanced are irrefutable.

Neither Christ nor the Apostles ever say a syllable respecting keeping a Sabbath, which evidently belonged to the Mosaic dispensation, and was abrogated by the coming of Christ, with every other Jewish observance not enjoined in the New Testament. Would Christ and the Apostles have passed by the Sabbath and said nothing respecting keeping it, if it was to be observed under the Gospel dispensation? Could they have committed such an oversight? The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Colossians respecting the abrogation of many things under the law, expressly says “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or

in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the *Sabbath days*; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” Here the Apostle evidently places the Sabbath among the other Jewish observances done away by the coming of Christ. We ask again would the Sabbath be placed in this questionable or rather abrogated condition if it was to be observed under the Gospel?

All must admit that the Apostles pointed out every sin to which christians were liable under the Gospel, and warned and cautioned them against every act or transgression of which they might be guilty; but no where does either Christ or any of the Apostles say a word about keeping a Sabbath, either Jewish or Christian. This of itself is conclusive evidence that christians were not required to keep a Sabbath any more than to be circumcised. While the Sabbath continued in force, it was almost constantly referred to, and the breach of it was spoken of as among the greatest of sins.

The art and sophistry of men can do but little in establishing any point when facts and evidence are wanting to support it. And notwithstanding the many plausible reasons that can be adduced for keeping a particular day as a Sabbath among christians, inasmuch as there is no authority for doing this either from Christ or the Apostles, there is no doubt but it has been much more injurious than beneficial to the cause of christianity and the practice of true piety. With many, particularly in New England, keeping the Sabbath is all the religion they have; and if this were taken away they might perhaps, before they die, get to see their condition and seek for something of a more substantial nature. But while they have this to lean upon, and make the keeping of a Sabbath the principal part of religion, there is but little hope they will ever see their true state or become any better.

The clergy are apprehensive that their trade will go down, and fewer

* Speaking of the 4th commandment enjoining the Sabbath, Calvin says: “The Fathers frequently call it a *shadowy commandment*, because it contains the external observance of the day, which was abolished with the rest of the figures, at the advent of Christ.” And again: “It was the design of the heavenly lawgiver under the rest of the seventh day, to give the people of Israel a figure of the spiritual rest, by which the faithful ought to refrain from their own works in order to leave God to work with them.” See Calvin’s *Institutes*, vol. i. page 418.

people go to hear them, and buy of their merchandize, if they do not keep up an observance of the Sabbath; and this is the principal reason, no doubt, that they make such a great clamour about keeping the Sabbath holy. After all, they have changed the day commanded to be kept under the law, so that they have no authority either in the Old or New Testament for keeping the day they now keep. It makes no difference, however, with our modern priesthood, whether they have any divine authority in the case or not, provided they can turn it to their own advantage. This is proved by the readiness with which they can violate the express command of Christ in preaching for pay and divining for money, when they are required in Christ's own words to preach the Gospel freely.

England for a few centuries back, and this country, are the only countries professing christianity where the first day of the week is accounted more holy than other days, or ever has been so accounted. In Catholic countries there are numerous Saint Days, and other days that are considered of much higher consequence, and are more exclusively devoted to religious worship than the first day of the week. The following communication, inserted sometime since in a Boston paper, will give further light on this subject, and show when, and how, the present impulse for keeping a Sabbath commenced. It will be seen that one of the persons who contributed to this impulse, himself abandoned the ground he had taken after a little conference with regard to it.

[From the *New-England Galaxy*]

SUNDAY.

There is much diversity of opinion on the question, what is the character, and what are the duties of the Lord's day. A large portion of the community in N. England give to this day a character altogether different from that attached to it in any other Christian country; it is commonly referred to in

the words of scripture applied to the Jewish Sabbath, and the obligation to observe it is considered by many as resting on the same sanction—the immediate command of God; whilst to all the prohibitions and restrictions, imposed on the Jews, is to be super-added the duty of constant and devout contemplation of the Christian graces. By some, the duties of this day are construed so strictly, that all social intercourse, the reading of any books not wholly religious, conversation, or even thought on any other subject than religion, are held to be not merely inexpedient but sinful; and yet it is a fact, that it is little more than two hundred years, since the idea was first seriously maintained, in the Christian world, that there was any sort of connexion between the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday, or Lord's day. It was first adopted by the Puritans, our ancestors, from whom we have inherited it, but has never been sanctioned by the Greek, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, or English Episcopal Churches, nor by Protestant Churches on the continent of Europe.

The opinion is now confined to a part of the descendants of the Puritans, in the United States, and a portion of the dissenters, descended from the same stock in England.

In the early ages of Christianity, the observance of the Lord's day, or first day of the week, was put in opposition to *Sabbathizing*, which was used as a term of reproach, although it was permitted to the Jewish converts to keep both days. It was first established as a day of cessation from labour, in the fourth century, by a decree of Constantine, and this confined its observance to *cities and towns*; country people continued to follow their work until the sixth century, when the Council of Orleans prohibited it, with the salvo that “to hold it unlawful to travel with horses, cattle and carriages, to prepare food, or to do any thing necessary to the cleanliness and decency of houses or persons, savours more of Judaism

than Christianity." It was kept in England, up to the time of the Puritans, as a festival or day of recreation and rejoicing, as it continues still to be, on the continent of Europe. The following extract from the chronicle of Sir Richard Bakers, written in the time of Charles the Second, will illustrate this fact, and is curious as exhibiting the manners of that day.

"In his (Charles I) 9th year (1634) the Sabbatarian-controvasie was revived by one Theophilus Bradbone, a minister of Suffolk, which first began in the year 1595, occasioned by a book put forth by one Dr. Bound; for before that time (as in Geneva at this day) no civil recreations were denied to any of the people at such times as they were not exercised in their public devotions at church. In Bound's book the following opinions are maintained:—

1st. The commandment of sanctifying every seventh day as in the Mosai-cal Decalogue, is moral and perpetual.

2d. That whereas all other things in the Jewish church were taken away (priesthood, sacrifices and sacraments) this Sabbath was so changed that it still remaineth.

3d. That there is great reason why we christians should take ourselves as straightly bound to rest upon the Lord's day, as the Jews were upon their Sabbath,—it being one of the moral commandments, for before all were of equal authority.

4th. The rest upon this day must be a notable and singular rest, a most careful, exact and precise rest, after another manner than men are accustomed.

5th. Scholars on that day are not to study the liberal arts, nor lawyers to consult the case, nor peruse men's evidences.

6th. Sargents, apparitors, and sumners to be restrained from executing their offices.

7th. Justices not to examine causes for the conservation of the peace.

8th. That ringing of more bells than one that day is not to be justified.

9th. No solemn feasts, nor wedding-dinners to be made on that day (with permission notwithstanding of the same to Lords, Knights, and gentlemen of quality.)

10th. All honest recreations and pleasures lawful on other days (as shooting, fowling, bowling) on this day to be forborne.

11th. No man to speak or talk of pleasures, or any other worldly matter.

The doctrine was at first very well received, because of the piety of such persons as maintained it in their public writings; but awhile after it was opposed as galling men's necks with a Jewish yoke, against the liberty of Christians; and further, it was urged, that Christ as lord of the Sabbath, had removed the vigour thereof, and allowed men lawful recreations.

That this doctrine puts an unequal lustre on the Sunday, on set purpose to eclipse all other holy days, to the derogation of the authority of the church, and that this strict observance was set up out of faction to be a character of difference to brand all for libertines who did not entertain it, so that Archbishop Whitgift called in all such books as were written on this subject. But Bradbone who revived this matter at this time, was questioned for it by the high commission court, whose well-tempered severity so prevailed upon him, that submitting himself to a private conference, and preceiving the unsoundness of his own principles, he became a convert, conforming himself quietly to the Church of England ever after.

Lost in this conjuncture of time, the King being troubled with petitions on both sides, by the strict and the more moderate observers of the Lord's day, thought good to follow his Father's Royal example upon the like occasion in Lancashire, where in his progress in the 14th year of his reign, taking notice that some preachers persuaded the people to so rigorous observation of the Sabbath, that it was unlawful therein to dress meat, to sweep their

houses, kindle the fire or the like, and that the Popish priests took advantage thereby to pervert many to popery, persuading them that the protestant religion was so rigorous that no lawful liberty was allowed therein, the year after he sent forth a declaration to this effect:

‘That for his good peoples’ lawful recreations, his pleasure was, that after the end of divine service, they should not be disturbed, letted, or discouraged from any lawful actions, such as dancing, either of men or women, or for men leaping, vaulting, or any such harmless recreations; nor from having May-games, Whitson-ales, or Maurice-dances, and setting up of May-poles, or other sports therewith used, so that the same be had in due and convenient time, without impediment or let of divine service, and that women should have leave to carry rushes to the church for decorating it, according to their old custom: withal prohibiting all unlawful games to be used on the Sunday only, as Bear-baiting, Bull-baiting, Chaterlades, and Bowling, (at all times) in the meaner set of people prohibited.’”

We know very well that the Church of England has never recognised the principle that the observance of the Lord’s day depended in any degree for its sanction on the command relating to the Christian Sabbath. We have lately seen that the learned Milton disagreed with his puritan friends who took up the opinion of Dr. Bound—and it is a fact, that Calvin in his Institutes declares for the abrogation of the Jewish Sabbath.

When an impulse for keeping a Sabbath after the manner of the Jews, was once started, the clergy were enabled to turn it too much to their own advantage to allow it to fall to the ground. All their ingenuity has been employed to make the people believe that it was a holy day like the Jewish Sabbath, only that the day is to be changed. In this they have so far succeeded

that whoever now expresses a contrary sentiment must expect to have his name branded with each and every vile epithet, from Maine to Georgia. But this ought to have no weight with one who acts from principle and has truth on his side. The time indeed seems now to have arrived when it is proper to meet the case fairly, openly, and fearlessly. Very few who have had correct views on the subject, have dared to express those views. The celebrated John Leland, however, one of the oldest and most laborious Baptist preachers perhaps in this country, made no scruple of letting his sentiments be known respecting the observance of a Sabbath among christians. Single and alone as he almost was, he feared not to be singular, and while living in Dutchess county, N. Y. and not employed in preaching on the first day of the week, we are told he worked on his farm. This was a great mortification to many of his Baptist brethren, who feared the Presbyterians and the scandal that might be brought on them for having such a preacher. But his character was too well known and too well established to be set aside. It was principally through his labours and faithfulness in Virginia, that the Church of England, then the established religion in that state, was brought down on a par with other denominations, the persecuting power of the Episcopalians destroyed, and the 16,000 pounds of tobacco per annum for preaching taken from the church parsons. It is to be regretted that his discourse delivered many years ago before the Legislature of Massachusetts, entitled “*A Blow at the Root*,” was not again put in circulation. Such independence of mind and freedom of expression are now rarely to be met with even among Baptist preachers, many of whom have become as fond of praise, and are seeking the honour which cometh from men, as much as any priests in our country. They are also in these parts as eager for high salaries, and as much engaged in the

popular schemes of the day, and in begging money under pretence of promoting the cause of Christ, as other blind and corrupt priests in our land. The Lord has said, "O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err," and the Baptists have need to beware of their spiritual guides and leaders, or not one stone upon another of their ancient simplicity will be left standing.

Extract of a letter from a correspondent at Boston, Massachusetts.

"I shall fill up my paper by giving some account of a grand (general union) meeting of the high Priests, Scribes, Pharisees and Doctors, which was called in this city a few days since, for the express purpose of adopting some efficient measures for the more rigid observance of the Sabbath, (as the first day of the week is stiled) the neglect of which was pronounced by these men (who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel) to be a moral pestilence, bringing down a fire of destruction into our dwellings, a wickedness (said they) which is not wholly confined to the common people, as the reverend clergy themselves were not entirely guiltless in this matter: for even some of those guardians of the peoples' souls profane the holy day by riding five, ten, or even fifteen miles on Sunday morning to preach, [what a shocking crime] and if those who were guides did thus set the pernicious example of violating the Sabbath by going to preach, [such distances, we presume] the people would follow it by going to hear. They then called particularly on doctors and ministers to aid in the work, and all the friends of (what they call) religion were urged to lend a helping hand in purifying the camp of Israel, even should it require the sacrifice of life, interest, and all, for the very atmosphere around (they said) was impregnated with the damning evil of Sabbath breaking.

"To give the more effect to their clerical self-righteous schemes, a cer-

tain Baptist preacher by the name of Sharp, got up and made one of the most foolish and hypocritical confessions that ever escaped the mouth of any one of superstition's dupes. And what do you suppose troubled his tender conscience? Why he had been guilty of setting the wicked example complained of, that is, travelling on Sunday to preach when he exchanged with a neighbouring minister. On those occasions he had travelled several miles to attend the meeting on Sunday morning, supposing at the time that his family circumstances did not admit of his going the day previous, for which [horrid crime] he was very sorry, and in the name of God did [apparently] very solemnly promise before the whole assembly that he would do so no more, no not even go a few miles to preach what they *profess* to believe is the gospel, which Christ's ministers were commanded to proclaim through all the world. [What straining at gnats, like the old Pharisees.]

"But to return to the meeting, the most singular act of duplicity that was exhibited by any one individual priest of the many who were present, was, that immediately after the subject of ministers travelling on Sundays to preach, had been introduced and held up to view as a profane and God dishonoring practice, a certain Methodist priest of Buckingham memory (J. N. Maffitt) got up, and in his usual flowery, airy style, gave his most unqualified sanction to the doings of the meeting, and so very anxious was he to show himself, or to manifest his entire approbation of what had been said on the subject of Sabbath breaking, that with the greatest imaginable pomposity, he flourishingly proclaimed to the gaping audience that a live coal from heaven's altar must have touched the lips and fired the tongues of the speakers, which had enabled them in such a powerful manner to stand forth in support of the cause of God. So elated was this mere 'nose of wax' in consequence of being exalted to a conspicu-

ous seat among the great and reverend orthodox merchants of mystery Babylon, that he quite forgot his own associates, the once poor despised circuit preachers, who journey ten, fifteen, or twenty miles on a Sunday, and preach three or four times in different places. This man of straw could not see that these wolves in sheep's clothing were aiming a deadly blow at the very soul of the Methodist itinerancy.

"Much was also said about getting up a line of stages to run in opposition to those that travel on Sunday; in order to engage all the friends of (*their*) religion in this scheme of priestcraft, it was asserted that these stages would all have *pious* drivers, and even the horses should have inscribed on their bells 'holiness to the Lord.' I would suggest to these modern fanatics the propriety of reviving the once popular farce practised by the famous St. Anthony, of baptising horses, which turned to so much pecuniary advantage to the religious speculators of that day.

"It was likewise stated that an impulse had been given to this project which had extended from Arkansas to Passamaquoddy, and they now called for a united effort in this glorious cause, which was the more necessary seeing there was at present but a small minority in the legislative assemblies of the country on whom they could depend for aid, but if there was a general coming up to the help of the Lord [their pharisaical righteousness] ere long there would be a majority of the men in power who would favour their *pious* exertions; for it requires (said they) the organized power of the nation to break down and destroy this desolating evil.—Still (they added) nothing can resist a union of effort in this work and labour of love; but (said they) if we should let go our hold New England will become a place of dragons, a desolate moral waste [without their *godly* care and dictation.]

"How difficult it is for these *pious* souls to conceal the cloven foot, which would improve the first opportunity to

tread down and trample on the liberties of the people, binding their consciences to the arbitrary dictates of these modern inquisitors, and their bodies to the stake, while the fiery zeal of these bigots would light up the pile, and all too (professedly) for the cause of God, and from a *pure* love for the precious souls of poor heretics, who could not believe in the infallibility of these lords over God's heritage: yet so destitute are these babel-builders of any thing like real honesty and uprightness, that one of them, a high professor, who took an active part as a member of the committee appointed for the purpose of making arrangements in relation to the future operations of the society, and who was appointed one of its principal standing officers, being since absent from home on business he so far overcame his scruples relative to the observance of set days, &c. as to return in the *mail stage* (a distance of more than fifty miles) on Sunday last. Thus you see these blind guides point one way and travel some other. Now there was no other reason for violating his own professed principles than that of saving one day in a business season; but the loss of a single day to this time serving professor was by far a greater evil than that of violating his creed.

A SPECTATOR.

A HIGH TRIBUNAL.

In the Western Recorder of April 22d, is an article signed by the Moderator and Clerk of the "Presbytery of Buffalo," designed as a vindication of the proceedings of that body in the trial of Rev. Jabez B. Hyde, a Missionary, who it seems had got into a quarrel with Rev. Mr. Harris, another Missionary engaged in the same cause; in which article complaint is made against Mr. Hyde, that it was with difficulty the Presbytery "could receive from the accused, that decent behaviour which became his circumstances and his calling, towards a *Court of Jesus Christ!*"

A court of Jesus Christ! The

"Presbytery of Buffalo" a "court of Jesus Christ!" And was this the tribunal where Mr. Hyde received his final sentence? Is there no appeal from its decision? Or is Mr. Hyde to be tried again at a future "day of judgement," by the same, or by a different tribunal? Was Jesus Christ the Judge of this court? or did he delegate his judicial authority to any one, or any number of members, of the Buffalo Presbytery? If he delegated such authority to any one as judge, was that judge infallible? And if so, where is the difference between the infallibility of Popery, and the infallibility of Presbyterianism? We should like to see these questions answered in the columns of the Recorder.—*Utica Mag.*

[We have seen a great deal formerly in the missionary prints respecting these missionaries, and what they were doing among the Seneca Indians to convert Red Jacket and his party. Of the two missionaries, from the accounts we have seen, we should suppose Mr. Hyde the best man. Instead of a benefit what an injury are such missionaries to the cause of christianity. Indeed, true christianity is in a fair way to be destroyed out of the land by what are called priests and missionaries, and their plans and schemes for raising money under pretence of spreading the gospel.]

For the Reformer.

QUERY—If the Methodists do not consider the *arm of civil government* necessary to advance the interests of religion, what meaneth the incorporation of the missionary society of the Philadelphia Annual Conference? And if they deem it needful in one State, on what principle do they condemn it in the United States?

A Friend to Consistency.

RELIGIOUS PLACARDS.

Since the formation of the General Union Society for promoting the observance of the Sabbath, placards or hand bills have been put up through this city, warning and cautioning the people against violating the Sabbath, by going in steam boats, &c. on that day. One of these hand bills was headed in large capitals, "*Glorious Victory!*" setting forth what had been

done, and what was going to be done.—Another, put up the evening before the 4th of July, in all parts of the market house, was headed in large characters, "*Huzza for Independence!*" followed by a mass of religious matter against the swearer, the Sabbath breaker, &c. If the persons engaged in this business had any religion themselves, it would be much better, and they would be much more likely to promote it in others. But really such measures do not seem much calculated to advance the interests of christianity, and have never before been resorted to but for political purposes and to produce political effects. How is christianity degraded by those who pretend to be its friends.

SABBATH SOCIETY IN THIS CITY.

At a meeting convened in the seventh Presbyterian meeting-house in this city on the 14th ult. a society was formed called the *Pennsylvania Branch, auxiliary to the General Union formed in New York for promoting the observance of the Christian Sabbath.* A committee of three has been appointed to ascertain whether any of the steam boats running between New York and Baltimore "will desist running at all on the Sabbath."

Plan for making more priests.

Among other plans adopted by the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, for increasing the "number of well qualified preachers," was the following:

"*Resolved*, That it be earnestly recommended to each minister in the Presbyterian church to induce the people of his charge to raise funds, or otherwise provide means, sufficient to educate at least one candidate for the gospel ministry; and that among feeble churches, unable, singly, to raise such fund a union be formed of two or more such weak churches, to accomplish the same object."

If this country does not become inundated in a short time by these "educated and competently qualified" priests, who will be more detrimental to the interests of true christianity and the welfare of society than the Jesuits of Europe, it will not be for want of plans and schemes for making them. Should this resolution be carried into effect, the number of Presbyterian preachers will be doubled in a short time. One Presbyterian congregation in New York ("Dr." Springs) has already engaged to take upon itself the expense of preparing 30 young men for the priesthood. Another Presbyterian

congregation in that city has also pledged itself to prepare 30 more, and a third ten; making in all, by these three congregations, seventy hireling priests to eat up the land and pervert the understandings and morals of the community. For priests made in this way, instead of being sent of God, can have no other tendency.

MR. BOSSLER—again.

The notice taken of Mr. Bossler's denunciations in our June number, appears to have put him in such a passion that he seems unable to govern himself with common prudence or discretion. Instead of reflecting on the impropriety of his conduct, and endeavouring to make amends for having attempted to injure an estimable and worthy individual merely because he could not consistently with a good conscience join in the priestly schemes of the day, this pretended ambassador of Christ seems to have heated his furnace of vengeance seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated—and under this great heat in another sermon he has again blazed forth against the same individual, as well as against the Reformer and all its supporters. But happily the individual whom he intended to consume was so well known, and so shielded by honesty and truth, that not a single hair of his head was singed, neither did the smell of fire pass on his garments; while Mr. Bossler, like Nebuchadnezzar men, in attempting to destroy others, has, we conceive, pretty effectually destroyed himself; for it can hardly be supposed that a pious and sensible people will give a man 6 or 8 dollars with a view to hear a gospel sermon and hear only vituperation and abuse, and that directed against a worthy and conscientious individual who had never attempted to injure any one, and who in the first place was cruelly and unwarrantably assailed by this pretended preacher of the gospel.

As some little specimen both of Mr. Bossler's religion and preaching, we give a short extract from a letter received from Mr. Burkhardt himself, the worthy individual against whom Mr. Bossler has particularly directed his vengeance.

"It appears that Mr. Bossler is determined on my ruin, and would willingly, like some of the disciples of our Lord, who knew not what manner of spirit they were of, command fire to come down from heaven to consume me and my house. He does all in his power to dissuade his hearers from supporting me. He repeated again what he had said some months ago,

that I was a *child of hell*, and a *child of the devil*, and that all my supporters were no better. He said I would go to *hell*, and all who would send their children to my school would follow me, and exhorted his congregation to *chase* me out of the village."

We regret our inability, for want of room, to further notice Mr. Bossler and his sermon at present. In the meantime we would inform him that we freely forgive his denunciations against the Reformer and its supporters, as we consider it quite a recommendation to have such a man opposed to the work, and were it not contrary to our principles to hire a priest, we conceive it would be greatly to our advantage to employ Mr. Bossler to travel through the land and preach against the Reformer. It might prove as successful as the denunciations of another priest soon after the work commenced, who, in preaching against it, charged his hearers from the pulpit, not to read it nor touch it.—The consequence was, that very soon the list of subscribers in that neighbourhood increased from six to upwards of sixty, many of whom were of his own congregation.

A Mr. Burr, lately deceased, has left in legacies to various charitable societies, so called, the sum of 96,000 dollars. Of this sum 17,000 dollars are given to the American Board of Foreign Missions; 10,000 dollars to the American Home Missionary Society; 10,000 dollars to the American Tract Society; 15,000 dollars to the American Bible Society; and 10,000 dollars for a seminary to prepare "pious youth" for theological studies.

Proposals have been issued by the Editor of the Lancaster (Penn.) Eagle to print the Reformer in the German language. We hope it may obtain an extensive circulation among the German population of our country.

We have been compelled to delay to a future number several interesting communications now on hand, as well as a number of articles selected from Priestcraft Exposed, Plain Truth, and the N. Y. Telescope.

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